

Australian Official Perfin Stationery

By Wayne Menuz

(Reprinted with permission from *Postal Stationery* #337:114-116 of July –August 2004)

Ed. Notes: I was alerted to this article by Bob Combs (LM#24), who included the author's e-mail address. When granting permission to reprint, Wayne Munoz (author of the article and Editor of *Postal Stationery*) included the following note:

"...the article prompted a number of comments, and it is now known that some of the items are definitely fakes. I plan to include this information in the Nov-Dec issue of PS..."

In this note, Wayne also requested that the original article be held till the new information had been printed (his Nov.-Dec. article which follows) and that they be reprinted together.

I have done some slight editing to fit the format of the *Perfins Bulletin*.

One last note: I have mentioned that Wayne is editor of *Postal Stationery*. This journal is the official publication of the UPSS (*United Postal Stationery Society* [<http://www.upss.org>]). Those interested in further information about the Society should contact Wayne (upss-ed@pacbell.net) or Bob (trainman@abq.com) for further information.

The independent states of Australia (Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia) issued various types of denominated postal stationery for the exclusive use of governmental departments. When the Commonwealth of Australia was formed from these states, the practice continued. These included envelopes, letter cards, post cards, wrappers, lettersheets and aerograms. A number of expedients were used to indicate on the stationery that they were not for general use:

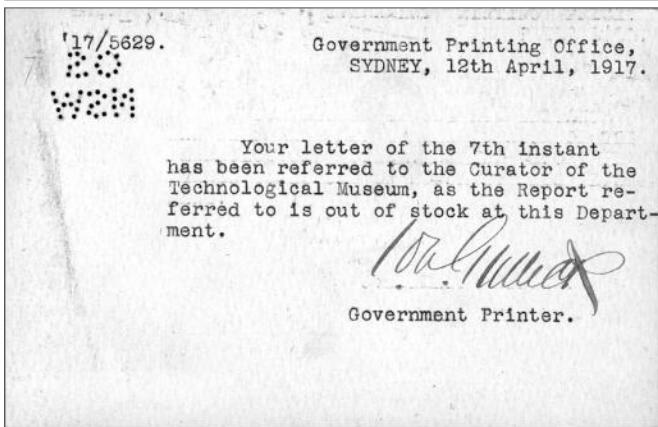
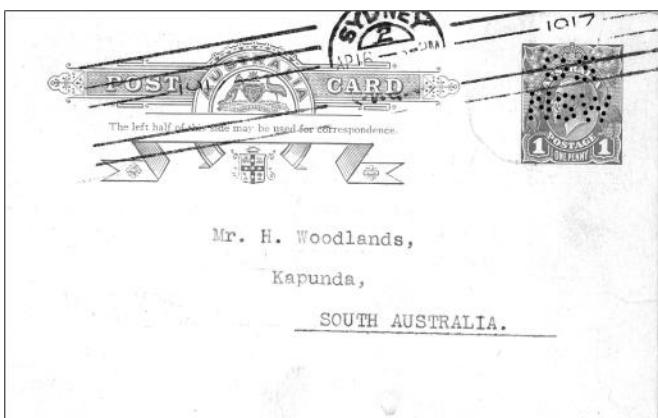
1. Regular issue stationary was utilized by:

- a. Overprinting on the stamp and/or on the body **On Her** (or later, **His**) **Majesty's Service, OHMS**, or similar.
- b. Applying a perfin over the stamp denoting **O S/N S W** (On Service/New South Wales), **G** (Government), **T** (Tasmania), and the like.

2. Printed to Private Order Stationery was ordered by the governmental agency and utilized by:
 - a. Printing **On Her Majesty's Service, OHMS**, or similar on the body.
 - b. Drilling holes in the stamp die that together formed the shape of the letters **O S**. The printed impression from the die showed the holes as non-inked holes. The resemblance of the printed stamp is of one with actual perfin holes, which was exactly the desired effect.
 - c. Later, excising the two letters in the die producing a white **O S** in the printed stamp.
 - d. Using the stationery without any special reference to it being a governmental issue. These often only contained a Post Office Box return address.

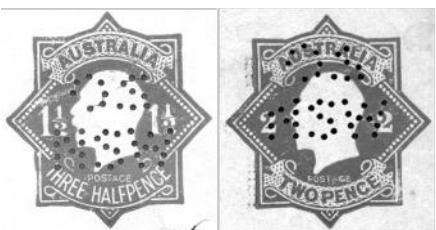
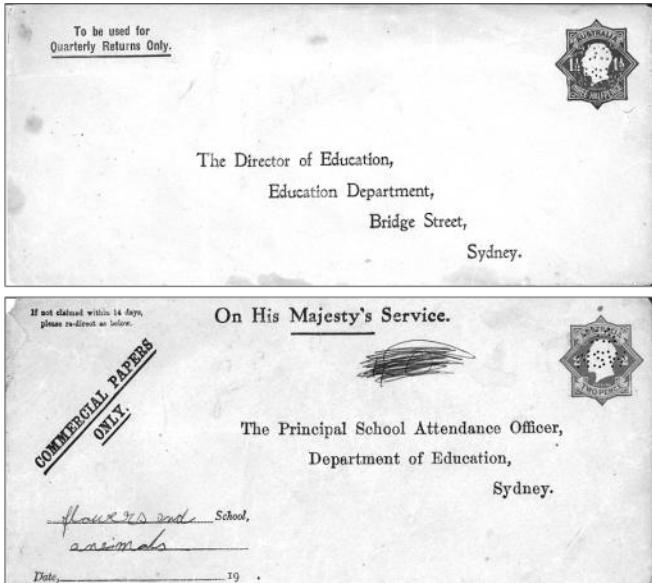


Some of these examples of official use stationery are listed in the Higgins and Gage catalog, but the vast majority are not. Except for the recent catalog of Western Australia (see review in *Postal Stationery* issue 325, July-August 2002), I am unaware of any other listing, or even an article covering these issues. Shown below is an example of H&G D7 with the perfin **OS / NSW** (On Service/ New South Wales.)

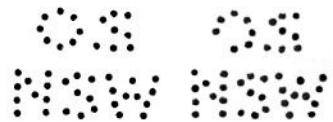


Earlier this year I purchased some lots in an auction that were described as containing aerograms that were perforated **G / NSW**. One of the duplicates was purchased by UPSS member Jerry Kasper. In a series of email exchanges Jerry and I began to question these items. And, the emails reminded me that last year I also purchased a couple of official perfin envelopes from the same auctioneer. The two envelopes have text on them indicating they are restricted for governmental use, and I have each without a perfin. These were the first items of stationery, other than post cards, that I record with an official perfin. Looking more closely at the perfins, they look "strange". And, the question comes to mind "why would there be need spend the

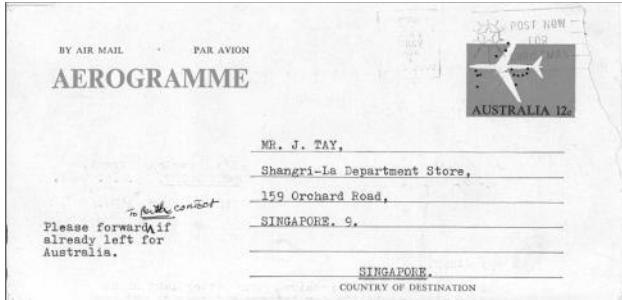
time and money to perfin an envelope that, because of the printing on it, is already restricted in use?"



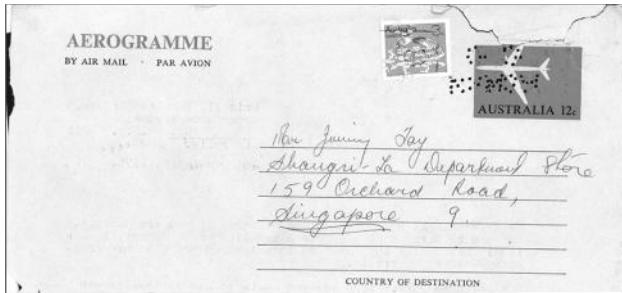
The perforation pattern is exactly the same on both envelopes, as illustrated above. One pin is missing from the "O". Since there are a whole series of Commonwealth of Australia general use post cards that were punched with the **OS / NSW** perfin, and since these have governmental messages on back validating their authenticity, a comparison of perfin patterns of some of these cards was the next step. The perfin patterns from a number of different issues, spanning about 40 years, revealed the exact same perfin pattern as used on the envelopes (The "flat" bottom leg of the "S" is a dead giveaway.) The earliest issues have all pins present, but sometime between 1921 and 1923 (based on the used items in my collection) the bottom of the "O" lost one pin (and had the 5 o'clock position pin bent up too close to the 3



o'clock pin). The upper left pin of the "N" because damaged, showing a blind perf on early issues, and completely missing on later issues. So, it appears the perfins on the suspect envelopes and those on the known genuine cards were made from the same perforator. It is possible, of course, that a forger placed a genuine card over the envelope and carefully placed a single perforator through each of the card's holes so as to produce the same pattern. At this point, I don't know. All comments from anyone who is aware of what the government's policy was, or perhaps, aware of other than cards with this perfin would be appreciated.

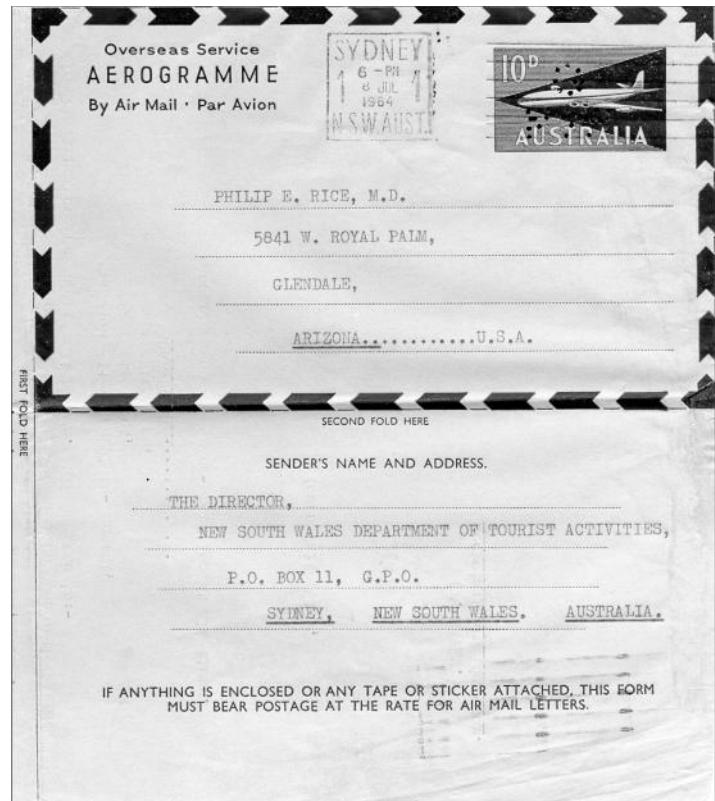


The study then turned to the aerograms. The perfins also look strange, and they employ a type not seen elsewhere: **G / NSW**. And, more to the point, the aerograms I have seem to be normal, personal correspondence, rather than government use or affinity. All are from a Mrs. Elizabeth Bowring to a person in Singapore, and mostly concern tailoring. The only hint is the following in one of them: "The Judge's shirts arrived. . . The Judge is very happy with the shirts except for two things. . . Please don not send them to Jim but address to: The Hon. Mr. Justice Woodward/Judges' Chambers, Supreme Court/Sydney/N.S.W."



The perfins all have a number of blind holes, but using computer enhancement, the arrangement is shown here. It is obvious that the "NSW" portion is not the same as used on the envelopes and post cards, so this is a new type, if genuine. What is interesting is that one of the aerograms has a double perfin (illustrated above), and along side is an ordinary 3c adhesive with the same perfin. Another aerogram has an ordinary 7c adhesive, again with the same perfin. The dates of use match the correct rates:

- 1974 11 27 -- 12c aerogram
- 1975 02 13 -- 12c aerogram plus 3c adhesive (overpaying by 1c)
- 1975 03 03 -- 12c aerogram plus 7c adhesive (underpaying by 1c)



Jerry Kasper sent scans of his aerograms, and his group is spread over a broad range of issues, used 1952 through 1970, and all but one has the same **G / NSW** perfin. Shown above is H&G number FG 14. The return address, The Director/New South Wales Department of Tourist Activities, plainly is of a governmental department. Below are illustrated two later issues, namely H&G numbers FG 22 and 27.

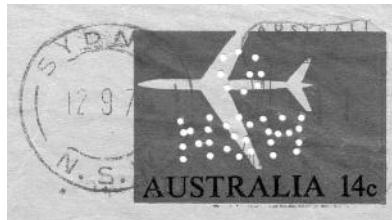
The contents of all of his examples seem to be of an official nature.



He wrote: "Re the perfins. . . . The first one I found was back about 1973 and was on official mail to a professor at UCLA about meteorites if I recall correctly. The other 5 are all official business of some sort or another. . . .

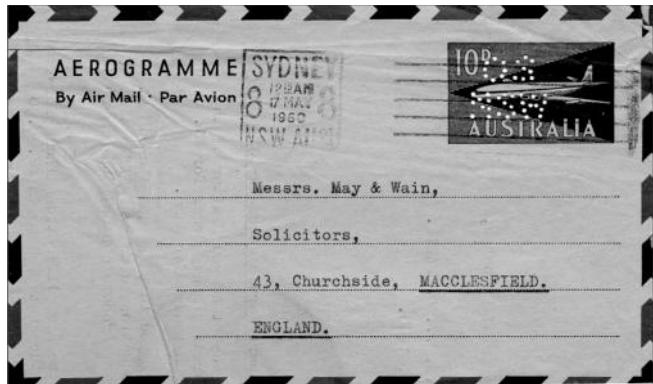
Frankly, I consider these related to the official aerogrammes."

At right is shown just the stamp from the 1973



14c issue that more clearly shows the perfin. It is clear that it is the exact same perfin that is on the aerograms in the lot I purchased. All of these **G / NSW** aerograms, therefore, have the same perfin, and it is likely they are all genuine. It is interesting that all are cancelled in Sydney – perhaps the New South Wales agencies decided to control the use of its stationery by these perfins, though the messages in the aerograms in the lot I purchased show clearly

that they were used for personal, not official business.



One of Jerry's aerograms, the earliest issue of them all (H&G FG 11, shown above) does not have the **G / NSW** perfin, but instead has the **OS / NSW** configuration.

Computer examination of the pattern shows it is exactly the same as the perfins on the post cards and envelopes described above. It is obvious now that this perfin was in use from about 1913 until about 1960 when it was replaced by the **G / NSW** pattern. Again, if any collector has additional information, or more examples, please contact me at upss-ed@pacbell. Also, collectors of aerograms may find Jerry Kasper's website of interest, as it contains a wealth of information. Especially useful are links to other web sites, such as one illustrating Ethiopian stationery in full color. You can find all this at www.aerogramme.com.